bal villages where the water scarcity is most acute;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI G. S. DHILLON): (a) In order to meet the requirements of drinking water in rural -areas of Madhya Pradesh, affected by the current drought, an *ad hoc* Central assistance of Rs. 4 crores has been released. This is over and above the normal Central assistance given under the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). This assistance will enable the Madhya Pradesh Government to tastal tubewells in 100 villages covering a population of 50,000 and instal 1800 handpumps in 1500 villages to augment the water availability for a population of 2.7 lakhs. The assistance would also finance tankers' supply to 400 villages, benefiting a population of 1.2 lakhs. Assistance was also extended to Madhya Pradesh for meeting the rural drinking water needs caused by the last year's drought. The ceilings of expenditure sanctioned were in two instalments of Rs. 6.15 crores and Rs- 1-765 crores respectively.

(b) and (c) Special assistance to any State is given depending upon the seve'rity of the drought situation, irrespective of the fact whether the affected area falls under the hilly tribal region or not. However, in the on-going rural water supply programmes under the State sector Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) and Centrally Sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), special attention is being given to hilly tribal areas. Under the ARWSP, coverage of Scheduled Castes | Scheduled Tribes villages! habitations have been piven first pri-lrity. Earmarking of funds under ARWSP for exclusive coverage of SC|ST population is also being done -md the coverage is monitored.

**Cost of production of cotton**

*373. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA; SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cost of production of one quintal of cotton in 1984-85 was about Rs. 360 in Punjab and Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) what was the cost of production in Gujarat and Maharashtra in the same year and if it was higher there, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI G. S. DHILLON): (a) Based on the data collected under the Comprehensive Scheme for Studying the Cost of Cultivation Production of Principal Crops in India, the per quintal cost of production of cotton works out of Rs-357.28 and Rs. 361.52 in 1984-85 in Punjab and Madhya Pradesh respectively.

(b) Although, cost of production estimates of cotton for Gujarat and Maharashtra in 84-85 have not been generated based on the cost estimates during the previous three years i.e. 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84, it has been observed that the cost of production of cotton in-Gujarat and Maharashtra have generally been higher than those of Punjab and Madhya Pradesh.

**Preponement of the Procurement Season for Kharif Crop in Punjab**

*374. SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to prepone the Kharif Procurement Season in Punjab to 15th September from 1st October: and

(b) what is the anticipated arrival of paddy in Punjab markers during September?